

APPROVED MINUTES
(Approved August 6, 2001)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY REDISTRICTING COMMISSION, 2001

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2001 AT 7:30 PM

Council Office Building
Rockville, Maryland

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Shirley Small-Rougeau, Chair
Andrew Morton, Vice Chair
Bill Sher

Steve Berry
Jayne Plank
William Roberts
Harry Lerch
David Davidson

STAFF

Ed Lattner, Assistant County Attorney
Pamela Zorich, Planner, Park & Planning
Ralph Wilson, Council Staff
Robin J. Ford, Council Staff

GUESTS

Nguyen Chau, Garrett Park Councilmember
Peggy Erickson, Dacek Office
Ronald Vaughn, City of Takoma Park
Luisa Sauseda, Hispanic Democratic Club
George Sauer, MC Republican Cent. Comm.
Dale Tibbitts, Citizen PAC
Charles Wolff, Citizen PAC

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Rougeau called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM, and noted that, due to illness, Commissioner Tai could not attend this meeting. All meeting guests introduced themselves to Commissioners and Staff. Mrs. Rougeau stated that her mailing address and home phone number have changed. The new information is listed below:

15111 Glade Avenue, 121C
Silver Spring, MD 20906
(h) 301-438-4634

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Staff noted that Mrs. Rougeau and Mr. Roberts both submitted revisions to the April 16th minutes, which were incorporated into the current draft. The Commission unanimously voted to approve the May 14, 2001 meeting minutes as corrected.

PUBLIC OUTREACH UPDATE

Ms. Ford reported that the letters informing both Councilmembers and community groups about the Redistricting Commission were sent and included in the information packet distributed at the meeting. Staff also reported that several groups and individuals have requested that they receive Redistricting information via e-mail.

MEETING SCHEDULE

At the last meeting, the Commission discussed hosting the July and August meetings around the County – specifically in Olney and an additional up-County location. Mrs. Plank reported that the incoming president of the Montgomery County Chapter of the Municipal League, Mayor Johnson of Poolesville said that the next Chapter meeting was scheduled for Thursday, September 20th. He will recommend that Redistricting be on the Agenda. Interested Commissioners should plan to attend to make a presentation of our proposals, answer any questions and bring comments back to the full Commission.

Because no firm arrangements have been made to host the July 9th meeting elsewhere, the Commission agreed to have the meeting at COB at 7:00 PM.

Commissioner Berry stated that he would work with Staff to arrange for the August 6th Redistricting Commission meeting to be held in Olney. He suggested the Olney Library, Longwood Recreation Center, Cashell Manor, and the Olney Swim Center. Several Commissioners also suggested Gaithersburg locations including the Casey Barn and Summit Hall Farm. Staff will check on the availability of each of these locations for the August 6th meeting and report back to the group.

Commissioner Davidson requested that the September public hearing be changed from Wednesday, September 12th, to its original date of Monday, September 10th. Staff will check on the availability of September 10th and report back to the group.

POTENTIAL BOARD OF ELECTION PRECINCT SPLITS

Per the Commission's request, Mr. Wilson contacted Sara Harris, Acting Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Elections, to get more information on possible precinct splits. Ms. Harris indicated that while, at this time it is too early to know exactly what precincts will be considered, the Board's policy is to review any precinct with a population above 4,000 as a candidate for splitting. While noting that this is only a partial list, Ms. Harris did list some of the precincts that will probably be considered for a split based on population, including: 2-01, 6-06, 6-07, 9-27, and 13-54. Ms. Harris stated that the Board would not make its final decision until the State election districts are determined. Therefore, this information will not be available in time for this Commission to incorporate results into the 2001 Redistricting Plan.

The Commission raised additional questions regarding the specific criteria for determining which precincts to split, and whether the Board of Elections splits precincts or simply shaves off some of the population of one and adds them to another existing precinct. The Commission also discussed how the capacity of the voting facilities and availability of election judges factors into the decision to split precincts. Mrs. Rougeau inquired as to whether or not the Board would be receptive to suggestions from the Commission to split precincts. Both Dale Tibbitts and Staff stated that the Commission has the authority to submit a plan with split precincts. To get the Board's responses to these questions, the Commission requested that Staff invite Ms. Harris to the July 9th meeting to discuss the criteria for determining precinct splits.

REDISTRICTING PLANS

Mrs. Rougeau opened the floor for presentations of any draft redistricting plans developed by Commissioners. Commissioner Plank and Commissioner Roberts presented plans, maps and memorandums explaining the details of the plans to the Commission. Ms. Zorich brought a laptop computer loaded with the ArcView GIS program and equipment to project both plans onto the wall for all to view.

PLAN C – submitted by Commissioner Plank

Plan C recommends that twelve precincts be moved to achieve Commissioner Plank's priority goal that the majority of citizens retain the same District representative that they elected in the last election. Commissioner Plank's primary goal is that the majority of citizens retain the same District representatives as they elected in the last election, while achieving more equal distribution of the 2000 population increases, and assure that municipalities, special taxing districts and communities remain in the same district. For additional Plan goals and specific details of Plan C, please refer to Jayne Plank's June 4, 2001 memo. Plan C recommends the following changes:

<u>In Council District 5</u>	from District 4 to District 5	Precincts 13-44, 13-11
<u>In Council District 4</u>	from District 4 to District 5	Precincts 13-44, 13-11
	from District 2 to District 4	Precincts 8-6,8-8, 8-10
	from District 3 to District 4	Precincts 4-19, 4-34
<u>In Council District 3</u>	from District 1 to District 3	Precinct 4-26 (annexed by Rockville)**
	from District 2 to District 3	Precincts 9-7, 9-28
	from District 3 to District 1	Precinct 4-28, 4-15
	from District 3 to District 4	Precinct 4-19, 4-34
<u>In Council District 2</u>	from District 2 to District 3	Precincts 9-7, 9-28
	from District 2 to District 4	Precincts 8-6, 8-8, 8-10
<u>In Council District 1</u>	from District 1 to District 3	Precinct 4-26 (annexed by Rockville)**
	From District 3 to District 1	Precinct 4-28, 4-15

***NOTE: While the memorandum for Plan C recommends that precinct 4-28 be shifted from Council District 3 to Council district 1 and precinct 4-26 from Council District 1 to Council District 3, the map accompanying Plan C shows precinct 4-28 in Council District 3 and precinct 4-26 in Council District 1. Mrs. Plank stated that the memo is correct and that the map is incorrect.**

****NOTE: Precinct 4-26 was not annexed by Rockville, as indicated in Plan C.**

Plan A – submitted by Commissioner Roberts

The goals of Plan A are outlined in the memorandum by Commissioner Roberts. The memo also included information on the population deviation on Plan A, stating that the greatest deviation below the optimal district population of 174,668 is Council District 2 at -2.26%. The greatest deviation above the target population figure is Council District 5 at 1.51%. Mr. Roberts also pointed out that item #3 on page 2 of his memo is no longer relevant and should be ignored. For specific information on the goals or details of Plan A, please refer to William Roberts' June 4, 2001 memo.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that, because Mrs. Plank had corrected her maps by noting that precinct 4-28 was intended to be moved from Council District 3 to Council District 1, the recommendations of Plan C are identical to those in Plan A. Mrs. Plank noted a slight difference between the plans; Plan C assigns 4-26 to Council District 3 while Plan A has it in Council District 1. Since assigning precinct 4-26 to Council District 1 reduces the percent variation from the target population number, Mrs. Plank supported Plan A.

After the submitters of Plans A and C agreed on a common plan, Ms. Zorich suggested that the two plans be merged into one Plan B for consideration by the Commission. The Commission agreed to accept Plan B as the proposed plan option submitted at the meeting reflecting the unified position of Commissioners' Roberts and Plank. Ms Zorich will have maps and data tables for newly created Plan B at the next Redistricting Commission meeting.

Regarding the information supplied in the tables provided with each plan, Ms. Zorich stated that for this initial presentation, the tables include population and racial information for districts and precincts. However, if the Commission would like to see additional information included in the tables, please let her know and she will attempt to include that data. Mr. Lattner suggested that future maps show both the proposed district lines as well as the current district lines to clearly show where changes are recommended.

DISCUSSIONS AND QUESTIONS ON PLANS

The Commission discussed some of the community impacts of the proposed Plan B, specifically on Montgomery Village precincts. It was pointed out that several neighborhoods or smaller communities that fall under larger communities, may or may not identify

themselves by the larger community name. Mr. Tibbitts noted that while a goal of the Commission may be to keep legally recognized municipalities and communities together, it may be more difficult to attempt to keep un-official communities within the same district.

Ms. Chau of Garrett Park raised the issue of the impact of Council redistricting on school districts and clusters, and on the political influence of certain communities. Mr. Morton indicated that it would be highly unlikely that the Redistricting effort would cause residents to attend school in one Council district but live in another. He stated that it could, however, result in a shift of the Councilmember that a certain resident or community was represented by. Mr. Tibbitts disagreed with that conclusion, noting that school clusters are made up of several precincts and removing one precinct from a cluster and putting it into a different Council district could result in residents living in an area represented by one person, but going to school in an area represented by another.

Ms. Chau also mentioned the impact that redistricting can have on the political power of the County's minority populations. She specifically noted that when a minority population is grouped together or lives together, they have more political influence. Mr. Morton indicated that the most the Redistricting Commission could do to try to minimize confusion regarding precincts and representatives is to keep precincts together when recommending shifts or changes.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

As requested by the Chair, Mr. Davidson distributed data on future growth in the County's planning areas for Commission consideration. Ms. Zorich also distributed a Park and Planning pamphlet containing similar information on population forecasts.

Mrs. Rougeau asked Mr. Tibbitts about any plans being developed by Citizen PAC. He indicated that he has been working on a plan to maximize minority influence as an effort to see what a Montgomery County minority/ majority district would look like. He stated that the maximum district minority population he has been able to achieve is 63.5% of the population. Mr. Tibbitts clarified that for his purposes, "minority population" equals total population minus non-Hispanic Whites, meaning that all the minorities were grouped together. Mr. Tibbitts may have this and/or other plans ready for the next meeting.

Mrs. Rougeau reminded the Commission to contact Pamela Zorich and Walter Robinson of Park and Planning Staff, or Robin Ford for access to the GIS software.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 9th, in the COB 5th Floor Front Conference Room, at 7:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.

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